This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

STANFORD
LIBRARIES

TWENTY-EIGHT SECONDS AND AFTER

A TALE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO EARTHQUAKE AND FIRE

BY

ELIZABETH STRONG WORTHINGTON
Author of "How to Cook Husbands," "The Gentle Art of Cooking Wives," "The Little Brown Dog"

ILLUSTRATED BY

CHARLES L. WRENN

1906

SAN FRANCISCO'S OVERTHROW

551
.2274
S19W
BRAN

STANFORD
LIBRARIES

551.2274
S19w

Copyright, 1906, by
ELIZABETH STRONG WORTHINGTON

Published June, 1906

213516

STANFORD LIBRARY

TO
THE SUFFERERS
I DEDICATE
THIS TALE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO DISASTER,
REMINDING THEM OF
GOD'S MESSAGE,
"AS THY DAY SO SHALL THY STRENGTH BE."

Methodist church, not far distant. Pietro, the boy—his mother's own boy—went with her to St. Ignatius, far away on Van Ness Avenue, and John made no effort to disturb Rosina's simple belief—she was faithful, pure, and loving; what more could he wish?

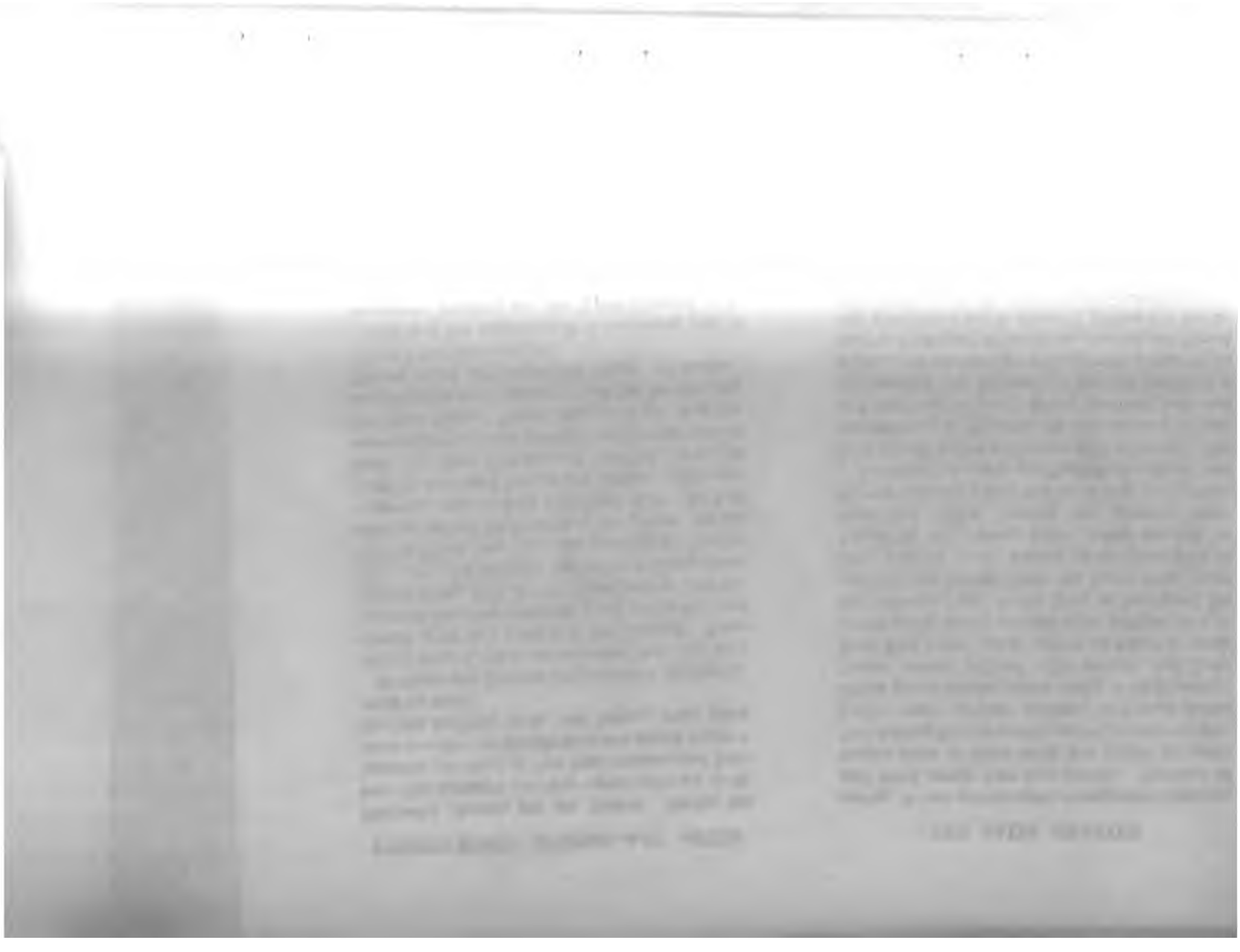
So there was division of opinion in the family, but no discord, for Love is greater than any sect, since it is the very essence of God Himself. Love had held them fast some six years now, ever since John Hawley, then a very young fellow, just beginning to cast his nets, had come walking down Vallejo Street one day, and seen pretty Rosina Sanchez among the flowers in her garden, on the slope that rises toward Telegraph Hill. He had fallen in love with her on the instant, heels over head, very deep, and as Love will find a way, he soon discovered some one who could admit him to that little home. Rosina was not a girl to make acquaintance with strangers, and her mother, the Señora, kind of heart but sharp of tongue, guarded her like a dragon.

This was the beginning of a courtship, and it progressed rapidly, for the Latin Quarter lent itself easily to wooing. With its old, odd houses, some of them tiny—a shop in front, a cottage, arbor, and garden at the side and rear, hedged in by rows of calla lilies that gleamed elfish white in the moonlight;—some of them rising like fortresses from the climbing street into which their luxuriant vines leaned and offered sweet blossoms to pass-

ers-by; it was picturesque; it suggested romance, and fitted cosily into love stories. Terraces of houses some of these were, you might say, each floor having its own quaint garden, on its own particular level; oriental gardens, with their palms whose green fronds rustled softly to each passing breeze; arbors trellised with wistaria and Lady Bankshire roses; shady arbors, in which a young fellow could scarce do less than whisper love to the dark-eyed girl beside him, as he sipped his wine—home-brewed from the home vines, most like; winding paths, leading up the steep sides of Telegraph Hill, along which lovers strolled on moonlight nights, waking the sleeping wild-flowers with the sweet strains of song and guitar.

Rosina stood under an English hawthorn tree that was all aglow with deep pink blossoms. She was thinking of the sweet old days she had known, and watching for John. Down the street some one was singing "La Paloma" to the soft chords of a guitar, and her heart grew happy with a tenderness that was reflected on her pretty face as she turned and went about her housework, putting the finishing touches to the Spanish beans and enchiladas.

Pietro sat in the kitchen near his mother patiently biding events, but Jessica became more and more troublesome, insisting that her father must come, and Rosina presently sent her over to Granny's, hoping she would content herself there. But ere long the resolute little feet came clattering back.



What was that? the bed was vibrating; John must be getting up ahead of time. Before she could turn to see, the vibrations increased; there was a jerk! another! jerk after jerk! each one more violent than the last; a roar like an enraged wild beast. Great God! the room was rocking, the pictures on the walls were swinging to and fro, one of them was flung upon its face. John sprang up and dragged Rosina out of bed, and caught up his clothes, but she could not stand as she threw on hers. A crash! then a shower of bricks broke through the ceiling. Pietro, in the next room, called shrilly, "Mamma! Mamma!" and Jess was screaming. John had disappeared, and Rosina staggered to her feet.

"Jesu, have mercy!" she murmured, with white lips.

From out the window she saw a heavy brick wall totter and come crashing over with a terrific roar and cloud of dust. The room was already on a slant, and the sickening rocking and jerking continued. She heard John's voice:

"Rosina, for God's sake, come, the house is falling!"

There was a cracking of timbers and the front of the house swung out. She staggered into the hall to see John, a child under each arm.

Then her voice came to her.

"Go on!" she called. "I come! Save the children!" And he leaped down the stairway, she following.

"Into the street, already crowded with fleeing, half-clothed people."—P. 9.

"IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE"

The garden was heaped with bricks and mortar, but he clambered, leaped, and staggered over them, and down the broken and wrenched stairway into the street, already crowded with fleeing, half-clothed people. On they went, Nero too, crouching in fright behind John as he ran; on, past shaken buildings; on, along Dupont Street, huddled full of terror-stricken Chinese. Every now and then John spoke a word of courage to the woman who ran with him.

"We'll soon be out of this;" he said. "We'll get to the Plaza where we're safe, before it comes again."

They reached the Plaza, in front of the Hall of Justice, and there stopped, and in silence hastily dressed the children.

Suddenly the woman shrieked.

"Mother of God! It's not my boy and girl!" and John saw for the first time it was not Rosina, but a neighbor who was with him.

Charging Pietro to stay right on that spot with Jessica and Nero, John started back. Before him the mother, who in the bewilderment and terror of the occasion had mistaken his children for hers, fairly flew over the ground.

Everywhere John saw signs of the earth's fury; in some cases it was a shattered chimney, in others a shattered building; but as yet he had no thought of the magnitude of the disaster; knew nothing of the horrors enacted in other parts of the city; how that vast pile, the City Hall, had

fallen—tons upon tons of brick and stone and mortar crashing down, and overwhelming several people caught by the awful hail; how the houses and other buildings around there had rocked, tottered, leaped, and danced the dance of fiends; how the ground rose and fell in waves, throbbing with demoniac pulse against the terrified bodies of pedestrians hurled to the pavement where they stood. He had not heard that shriek—a shriek torn from the throats of agonized creatures who went down beneath the ruins on every side; one instant living human beings, the next a mass of crushed and palpitating flesh, glad, it may be, wherever their spirits had found rest—glad to be dead, really dead, incapable of further suffering, and not in the awful strait of those who were buried alive, wounded perhaps, or perhaps unharmed, but buried in some inaccessible hole, awaiting the fierce oncoming of torturing flames, unless indeed a pitying onlooker (crying God's forgiveness for taking the issues of life and death into his own ignorant hands) crept forward, covered with a blanket, and dropped a revolver to them between the interstices of the tangled ruin that held them prisoners. Nor had he seen the people rushing out into the streets in their nightclothes; some cursing, some even laughing like maniacs, some praying; strong men bellowing like babies; women shrieking for missing children.

But although John was ignorant of the full hor-

ror of the occasion, something of it all was dawning upon him as he ran.

He could scarce find his home—so many terrible changes! And when he reached the spot at last, nothing was there but a disjointed shell, its floors lying in a tossed-up heap in the cellar.

Already a little band of neighbors were hard at work upon this pile.

"What's under?" asked John, his face ashen.

"We can't tell yet," they answered evasively.

"Why are you at work here?" John demanded fiercely.

They hesitated a moment, then one of them said:

"We heerd a woman's scream from somewheres, an' we're afeer'd thet——"

John caught at the fallen timbers like a maniac. One after another he hurled aside. A few feet farther up the street another band of men, women too, were hard at work upon another ruin. Once in a while a groan came from under the pile of *débris*, and soon they saw a hand that feebly moved trying to beckon. But the timbers were heavy, and before the workers could lift them all, the hand was still.

Meanwhile John and his band toiled on in silence, their faces grim as death.

"Oh! Take care, take care!" said one of the men hoarsely. "See! what's that?"

It was a woman's skirt wedged in between the timbers. A kindly man tried to hold John back,

but he shook him off and tore the shattered boards from the hideous pile that covered something. It was she, and her face, protected by the fallen boards, was unscarred. It was even pretty as she lay there in her tomb of ruined timber, a crucifix grasped firmly in her hand.

They felt for her heart, but it was silent, and John caught her up in his arms with one moan of agony. Then gently laying her down, he ran across the way to Granny's house.

"Help me!" he cried to the men about him. "Help me save her! It's my wife's mother."

But they pointed silently to the pavement, and there she lay, covered with a sheet that some one had thrown over her to hide her wounds.

John felt his brain reel, and turning to Rosina took her in his arms and started down Dupont Street.

No one tried to stop him, for a rumor of fire had come flashing up the street, and already the people, in an excited crowd, were pressing down toward Sansome Street. On he trudged drearily, with his limp burden. He was calmer now, and in a dead sort of way was turning matters over in his mind. What should he tell the children? He couldn't tell them that mamma was dead. And where should he take her? His little home had gone—he wouldn't take her to the morgue! he did not know that it was in ruins. He'd keep her with him and the children till he could think again. So he reached the Plaza, the place where he had

left the children, but no Pietro and Jessica were there; only a herd of Chinese, Spanish, French, Italian, Negros, Japanese, every nationality; some dumb—paralyzed; others chattering incoherently, trying to tell the story of their recent terror. Not far off a big fire was raging; there was no water to put it out, some one said; the pipes were jammed together by the earthquake. Soon there was sound of heavy explosions, like artillery on the battle field. They were dynamiting buildings to check the fire. With no particular aim John wandered on, still carrying that slender form in his arms. He saw, without seeing, automobiles flying about. In one the mayor rode, calling excited orders now and then, and pointing here and there. The firemen worked heroically, but they were without their brave leader that morning, for Chief Sullivan lay dying near the ruined California Hotel, where the earthquake had struck him down as he lay asleep.

Some one shouted to John to get back.

"What are you doing with that woman? Take her up to the Merchants' Exchange if she's wounded," and John mechanically turned and made his way back to the little Plaza he had just left. It was less crowded now, most of the people were following some of the many fires that had started up about the city. On the trampled lawn in front of the Hall of Justice lay a number of still figures, each one wrapped in a white sheet. Every now and then somebody would come and lift the

sheet from the faces, one after another, looking, with a blinding terror in their eyes, for a friend. John laid Rosina on the grass beside the other dead, and seating himself on a near bench kept watch. He had almost forgotten the children now. He was not thinking of anything; just watching Rosina.

The hours passed unheeded, and the sun—a great ball as red as blood—swung into the western sky. Already the fires had eaten the heart out of the business district, and were widening, ever widening their circuit. The roar of flames and the jar of the explosions was deafening, and cinders fell in showers.

Still John sat there, dumb and motionless, till he heard some one say they had taken the injured from the Merchants' Exchange up to the Mechanics' Pavilion, because the fire was nearing the former place. Then all at once his brain seemed to flash fire; he could think and act now. He could carry Rosina there; she was not dead, only wounded, and the doctors could make her well.

Taking her up once more he started off as rapidly as possible. It was a long way, but his frenzied hope made light of the distance. Into the Pavilion he staggered at last, and made his way toward a group attending the sick and wounded.

"It's my wife," he said; "can you bring her out of this?"

One of the doctors came forward, and taking

John's precious burden from his arms laid her on a rude cot.

He bent over her in silence for a few moments; then he turned to John and said, very gently:

"My poor fellow, your wife is beyond my help."

"Dead?" John asked, and the doctor nodded.

They raised her from the cot, for every one of these rude beds were needed for the living, and carried her over to where a row of still figures lay on hastily improvised slabs.

"Let me arrange her hair," said John, in a dull, hopeless sort of tone, "I'll make it look like it used to."

He pottered clumsily with the pretty, wavy hair, while the doctor turned away, his eyes brimming over, to care for his many patients.

"Rosina, good-bye; maybe the children are with you. Good-bye, dear girl."

And he went slowly out of the building, dragging one foot after the other. He was tired enough to lie down and die, but he did not know it. He was faint for food too, but he never once thought of that. He did think of water, however, for his skin was burning hot, and his throat felt parched and stiff. Everywhere he ran across soldiers. The entire city was under martial law, and the orders of the chiefs were carried out relentlessly, often with brutal and reckless exactness.

John's aimless feet were caught in a great surging tide of people, sweeping off, away from the de-

vouring flames which now wholly possessed some parts of the city. Market Street was a fiery cauldron; only the trained fighters were there; but great numbers of people were making a détour, intending to go, by way of the water front, to the ferries, and escape from the burning city.

Without a hope, without a plan, with scarce a thought, John mechanically dragged along with them. Several times he paused and helped frightened little children, who had lost their hold of mother's gown and been brushed down by the throng.

Near the Ferry Station were many naval men—sailors and marines. John was too dull and dazed to note the tender kindness with which they helped weary, fainting women bear their burdens of household stuff or child; or to hear the many relief workers as they went among the crowd, asking one after another, "Are you going to friends, have you a place to stay to-night?"

Many in that throng will never cease to talk of the thoughtfulness of the administration. It really seemed supernatural. Although the horror had stricken the city in a moment, as it were, yet nothing was overlooked. As far as possible every care was taken of the suffering refugees.

Expressmen of the sort that prey, like hyenas, upon death's work, were held in check, as far as possible, by the firm hand of authority.

"Take my goods to the Ferry," called a frantic

man to one who drove a wagon, "I'll pay you two hundred and fifty dollars if you will."

"Make it twelve hundred," said the beast of prey; "not a cent less."

But a soldier overheard him and interfered.

"Here," he said, with pointed musket, "take this man's goods for nothing, and the next time you charge anything above reason you'll get a bullet through you."

Food and water were of necessity scarce, especially the latter, with the water mains jammed and twisted, and in some instances confused with the sewer pipes. No one could make food out of nothing, but as far as possible the city's stores were utilized for the needy, without money and without price. And God be thanked! there was even then a train of cars, groaning with provisions, flying westward; another flying southward, sent by the great warm human love that makes us all akin. "Clear the track!" the order was. "Give the food the right of way," and so it was speeding toward the stricken city, each car labeled "RELIEF FOR SAN FRANCISCO," even that first horrible night. But for this mercy, thousands would have died of exhaustion and hunger in the streets.

"Have you any place to stay to-night?" a kind-faced man asked John. John roused with a start.

"Where am I?" he asked.

"You're at the Ferry, bound for Oakland."

what had been home. Without thought of time or space he covered the ground, flying rather than walking. Once in a while the name so dear to him broke from his parched lips.

"Rosina, I'm coming, coming, my girl."

There was the ruined home and there the awful pile. With brain on fire John ran toward it.

"Halt!" It was the stern voice of the sentry, but John ran unheeding.

"Halt, or I'll fire!"

Still John ran on, blind and deaf and dumb to all but Rosina; and then a shot rang out, and he felt a sharp, burning pain, as he stumbled forward and fell—near Rosina, he said to himself.

It was some time near dawn of the day following the earthquake that a minister passed that way and saw a lonely figure lying helpless and wounded on the fallen timbers of a dwelling. The good man had been busy ever since the catastrophe protecting and cheering his family, strengthening his people, calling hungry passers-by into his home, soon to be made desolate, and dividing his last food and drink with them. Now he bent over this sufferer, and binding up his wound as best he could, went to the nearest military station, and notified them that some soldier had shot a man, and not even reported him for care.

Directly a wagon, used as an ambulance, came to the spot, and the two men in charge tenderly lifted John from where he lay.

"Poor fellow," said one, "I guess he's done for."

PART III

"WEEPING MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT"

Pietro would have stood steadfast in the Plaza, in the spot where his father left him that Wednesday morning, and so would Nero, for the dear old dog was accustomed to wait for hours if need be, wherever he was left, if his master but spoke the word. But Jessica was of a different sort, being a Saxon child; for while the Saxon race is certainly no less steadfast than the Latin, it is as certainly more venturesome and unruly. All her little life long Jess had run away. The child and her dog were known the length of the Latin Quarter. No street, narrow or broad, ever dismayed her, whatever its length, and no crowd possessed for her aught but fascination. It is said that when women folk are fearless they are generally more so than men. Some of creation's lords, of the sort that haunt the under side of the bed in time of danger, basely explain this phenomenon of woman's intrepidity on the score of her brainlessness; not having sense enough to recognize her peril, they say she seemingly braves it. The discussion is open to any who may wish to enter. But however the question may ultimately be settled, Jessica's case really seems to uphold the very

uncomplimentary opinion of the masculine thing under the bed. Certainly she was ignorant of her peril, as, lured by the noise and commotion, she ran up Kearney Street accompanied by Nero, and followed by the shouting Pietro. The latter was by a year her senior, but she could outrun him, especially when he was clumsy and fell, as he did this morning. In vain he called her back and reminded her of the father's command; his adjurations smote wilful ears; Jessica ran on, and it was all he could do to keep her in his terrified view. But by and by she paused to gaze at something, and he caught up with her.

"You are a very bad" (he searched for a noun with a sting in it) "a bad idiot."

Jessica promptly slapped him, and he began to cry. Then her heart melted within her.

"Pi'tro, don't cry. I won't slap. I'm good now. See!" And she exhibited herself in a reformed light.

Pietro rubbed his eyes dubiously, but Jessica's next remark fired his imagination and his interest.

"We'll go see the fire."

"Where is the fire?"

"I don't know; we'll find it. We'll run after all the people; they know."

And away the two went, Nero with them.

The fire was finding them now, for it was coming up their way. It had found a number of people by this time, and the streets were filled with a

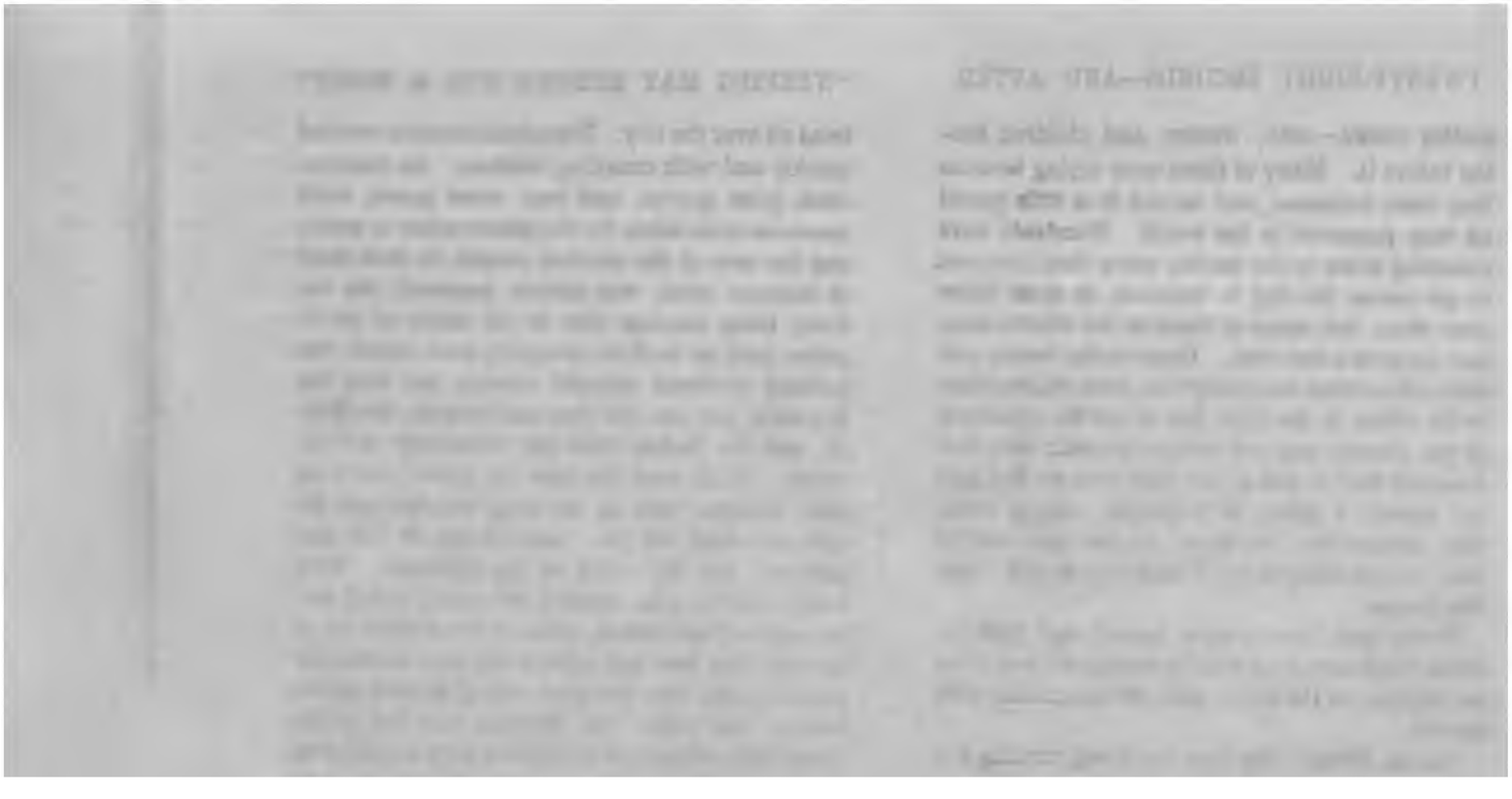
motley crowd—men, women and children fleeing before it. Many of them were crying because they were homeless, and carried in a little parcel all they possessed in the world. Hundreds were crowding down to the ferries, using their last cent to get across the bay to Oakland, or some other near place, but many of these in the streets now, had not even a last cent. Later on the ferries and railroads carried everybody free, even taking them to far points in the East; but as yet the greatness of the disaster was not comprehended; very few dreamed that it was a city that was on fire, and not merely a group of buildings. Even when they learned that the water mains were out of gear, people thought the dynamiting would check the flames.

Pietro and Jessica were jostled and buffeted about like leaves on a tossing water, but they were accustomed to the street, and not unfamiliar with crowds.

"Look, Pi'tro!" the little one cried, turning her brother right about face, "see! oh, but they're pretty!"

And Pietro looked up the street to see the soldiers coming, and just then, at that fearful moment, they were indeed a beautiful sight. There was something soothing in their rhythmic movement; a sense of strength and protection in their resolute, orderly advance. The call for soldiers had gone out to the Presidio, and two companies had responded instantly and were ere long scat-

tered all over the city. The administration worked quickly and with unfailing wisdom. As the situation grew graver, and ever more grave, swift measures were taken for the preservation of order; and the care of the stricken people, in their hour of supreme need, was almost paternal; the saloons, those demons that in the midst of civilization hark us back to savagery, were closed; the military rendered splendid service, not only the Regulars, but also the National Guards, the Militia, and the Cadets from the University of California. Each man fell into his place, and with quiet heroism took up his long watches and his arduous work for the preservation of life and property, and the relief of the sufferers. With them, side by side, worked the many Relief and Protective Committees, some of these made up of citizens who had lost almost all that makes life precious, and who yet were toiling to save others from a like fate. The firemen and the police threw themselves into the breach with an abandon of self that calls tears to one's eyes at the thought of it, and makes one's heart grow big within him. Heroes were plenty in those days, too plenty for mention, and many of them lie to-day in unmarked, unknown graves, a pile of smouldering ruins their only tombstone. But on God's book of heroes their names appear, no doubt, written in clear letters. "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends"—and they gave their lives for strangers.



TWENTY-EIGHT SECONDS—AND AFTER

It all came upon the city so suddenly, awakened as she was from out her deep morning sleep to find the world rocking, swaying, tottering about her, that people were dazed. The brain had received a shock and could not work readily. Men in authority, under the fierce pressure of the present need, thought swiftly and well, but without that stimulus, people stood about dumb and uncomprehending. The soldiers pushed them back from the danger line with their bayonets; moved them from one spot to another like so many inanimate blocks. But for this care they would perhaps have stood there stupidly staring till the falling walls swallowed them up. Many of them had seen husband, or wife, or child, go down into the ruins when the earth shook and their homes gave way like cardboard, and after such a sight as that, for a while, at any rate, life really does not matter much.

All of this was hidden to Pietro, Jessica and Nero, who were out for a holiday, although Nero would really have preferred being at home, eating his breakfast out of the tin plate at the back door, had the children been willing. By and by their little stomachs reminded them of the passing moments, but when they turned to go back the way was strange, and they were hemmed in by a seething crowd of people. Pietro began to cry.

"Don't cry, Pi'tro," Jessica murmured, soothingly; "is you hungry?"

"WEEPING MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT"

"I want mamma," said the child, "and papa."

"They'll come pitty soon; I is most certain they is coming now."

"Stand back here with me," said a young woman bending over the children. "It is a hard place for little children, isn't it?" she added, tenderly. "Have you lost mamma?"

"Yes," said Pietro, sobbing again; but the young woman took his hand in hers and stroked his pretty face.

"Don't cry, dear; she's somewhere in the crowd, I presume. You'll find her when the fire is out."

Then she gave a little gasp and her face grew white and rigid as she heard a call for volunteers to help unearth some people caught in the ruins of a falling wall.

"I knew he'd go," she said to herself, between set teeth, as she watched a young lieutenant step forward, his handsome uniform torn and streaked with soot and mortar. Several soldiers sprang after him, and together the little group quickly made their way, under the crackling, burning timbers, to the pile of rubbish that formed the living tomb.

"Does he want to be burnded up?" asked Jessica.

"No, of course he don't," said Pietro.

"Why does he go there?" persisted Jessica.

"He goes—" the young woman was speaking now, and her voice sounded like a dry sob, "he

goes because he feels it's his duty to risk his life for others."

Then she closed her lips, and an exalted look stole over her face, lighting it up.

A cry rose from the onlookers, for the flaming building began to totter. The soldiers heard the warning, and ran out, but the young officer had gone too far. They saw him turn and look toward life, and then——

"Oh, my Father in Heaven!" broke from the young woman's pallid lips, and some one carried her tenderly out of the crowd.

The mass of people moved on; it was getting frightfully hot, and in some places the sparks and cinders rained down upon the street so thick and fast that none but those bravest and most experienced in such work dared run the fiery gantlet.

"Molly, if you'd only go home!" whispered a fireman hastily to his two weeks' bride.

"Shure, now, where is our home, Mike?" she asked.

"O God! I'd forgotten! It's gone! But go, Molly; go now, dear; somewhere out. Shure, you unnerve me standing here, watching."

"Och, Mike, fer shame; it's not Molly O'Brien who'd iver sthand in the way ov her husband's dooty. Go on ter yer wurk, an' niver give me a tho't. I kin bear what comes ter me. I want ter see ye do yer paart loike a brave man."

"Shure, now, ye shall!" and he went back to his post.

A little later she lay on the trodden grass of a near-by square sobbing over his white, dead face, and thinking how she shouid never hear him speak again. And then she left him there, sleeping so quietly amid the roaring of the flames only a few rods distant, and tried to comfort a broken-hearted mother who had lost her three children when the earthquake shook their tenement down.

Little Pietro and Jessica moved on with the rest, and the woman whom the dead fireman had given his life to save was struggling on ahead of them. She had flaxen hair that was still pretty, but her face was spotted and haggard, and there were deep hollows under her blue eyes. A drunken sleep had all but cost her her life, whatever that life was worth. It seemed a pity for so brave a man to die that one so unworthy might live. But it is not for bravery to sit down and calculate the cost or the worth. We have none of that to settle; for us, the deed; for God, what follows. The woman was sober enough now; for the first time in a long while she was looking life in the face.

"I want to ride. I is tired," said Jessica, and faithful Nero heard and understood, and, true to his training, crouched for the little girl to get on his back. The sight of the strange mount and the sturdy little rider attracted the attention of a pretty, young married woman who was trudging along at Pietro's side.

"If only we all were children," she said, with a weary smile.

"Where are your little children?" asked Pietro.

"I never had but one; God took that one away;" and she began to cry.

But it was not for the baby alone that she was crying. Three years had passed since Baby had gone, and during that time one trifle after another had crept in to sever her from her husband, until now a chasm stretched its ugly width between them, and that very day she had expected to go into court to ask man to put asunder those whom God had joined. Baby had died; that was hard enough to bear; but now she was about to lose Baby's father through a living death, and she was all alone with night at hand, a night aflame, a night of heart-ache and yearning. Even at the brightest noon it is a dreary thing to walk alone, and when day wanes we want a home; some one to love; some one to be loved by.

Neither gas nor electricity lighted the city that night, and yet it was never so bright before; not with the brilliancy of holiday illumination, such as it had often known on some great night of fête and rejoicing, but bright with the glare of the infernal regions.

"Look back!" cried a man to the long procession; "isn't this hell?"

They had reached the top of a hill by this time, a few of them, some hundred people, out of the three hundred thousand coming, or on ahead, all

homeless and foodless that night. They were caring little for what they had lost, if only they could live, the passion for property swallowed up in the stronger passion for life. Behind them in every direction were fierce, upshooting, devouring flames; flames leaning far over one side and another, and seizing building after building; leaping great spaces to catch, in their fiery arms, some new victim. Still the heroic fire-fighters toiled, without rest; no water half the time, nothing but dynamite as a weapon.

Over in Oakland, on the heights, an awestricken multitude watched, with blanched faces, the destruction of the great city. Many, many were the heart strings that ran across the bay; husbands, sons, daughters, friends, were over there in that seething furnace, for the earthquake caught many who were temporarily away from home, and the fire held them captive. Were they alive or dead? How were they faring? Where could they go when everything was on fire? "O God, be merciful!"

By day a dense column of smoke hung over the doomed city like a black pall; by night the fierce, maniacal flames glared like demons. The watchers could follow their course; could almost hear their horrid roar; could see them leap up when a building fell in, feeding fresh fuel to them; and through it all, every now and then, there came the heavy, despairing boom of dynamite, like the boom of guns from a vessel wrecking in an awful sea.

Over in the city poor little Pietro and Jessica did not realize much of this, but they did reallze that they were tired and hungry; they realized that night was at hand, and that they could not find their home or their father and mother.

Pietro began to cry, but in an instant Jess had slipped from her canine steed and put her little arm around his neck.

"Don't cry, Pi'tro, I know papa's coming now right away; and I'm going to get some good things for you to eat so soon as I can. You ride Nero now."

"I've got a piece of bread in my bag," said the pretty, young married woman, "here, dear," and she gave it to Jessica, who promptly divided it between Pietro, Nero and herself.

There was a smothered cry near at hand; a little group of soldiers and two or three other men had formed a protective circle, holding blankets around some one who lay upon the pavement. As the group shifted position slightly, Pietro's and Jessica's kind friend caught sight of a man, his white, agonized face lighted by the fire's glare, as he supported a young woman—his wife they learned later.

"What is the matter?" she asked a woman near her.

"Oh, stop! perhaps we can help," was the answer, and it came with a groan; "isn't it awful when a child comes to a mother on the street!"

The reverential circle—those plain men—parted

to let them in, to take what care a woman might of the young mother, in that awful crisis.

A few minutes later the ambulance came, in response to the hasty call, and the two women who had paused in their dreary march, to help, now joined the moving throng again, and before long reached Van Ness Avenue, where, secure for the moment, they rested on the steps of a handsome house. Near the children sat a dishevelled woman, who grasped in her trembling hand a blanket, tied up in which were a few underclothes.

"All we have in the world now," she explained to those about her. "My husband is in this awful furnace somewhere; he went to see if he could save something; he may be dead now, God only knows! but we've lost everything; and last night we were worth almost a half million."

She was talking to a quiet little couple who had not lost much, for the simple reason that they had never owned much. She did not recognize them, but they knew who she was, for they had lived just across the street from her for two years.

"An' is it yersilf, Mrs. McDonald?" asked a big, hearty Irishwoman, who sat on the step above her, holding a baby in her arms. "Shure, but Oi'm sorry ter see yez in sich a plight! I used ter cook fer yez afore I was married. It's loike ye remember Mary Ann McCarty thet's Mrs. O'Flarity now."

"O Mary! Mary! these are changed times!"

"Not so much fer me, Mrs. McDonald. Och,

blissed be nothin', I say. It's nayther airthquake nor fire kin take it from yez."

"We've got to begin life all over again," the woman went on.

"Take an egg, an' fergit it, now," and Mrs. O'Flarity produced from an ample pocket, a couple of hard-boiled eggs, and she and her former mistress sat there together munching them.

"If only we had a drop of water, now," said Mrs. McDonald.

"Don't spake of it, ma'am," responded the Irishwoman. "Shure me lips is so dhry that whiniver they paart it sounds loike the Fourth ov July. I kin chrack a smile in good airnest now."

"This is a day of judgment," said a stern-faced woman who sat near Mrs. O'Flarity, looking out with awful visage upon the holocaust.

"There've been awful happenings to-day, all right," said a tired-looking young fellow; "the soldiers are just shooting down people by the scores. You don't hardly dare look for your friends, for fear they'll think you're looting, and shoot you. I heard that a young lady was just crazy about some of her folks, and she got to the ruins of their house and a sentry told her to halt and she was so frightened she ran on, and he just drew a bead on her and killed her outright. They say that the surgeons found that the bullet went right through the center of her brain."

A tall, silent man near at hand was wondering

where and how the surgeons found opportunity to perform the autopsy that day.

"Did you hear the earth had opened this morning?" struck up a woman. "Yes," she went on, "they do say it opened, and the crack was so wide it swallowed up a house!"

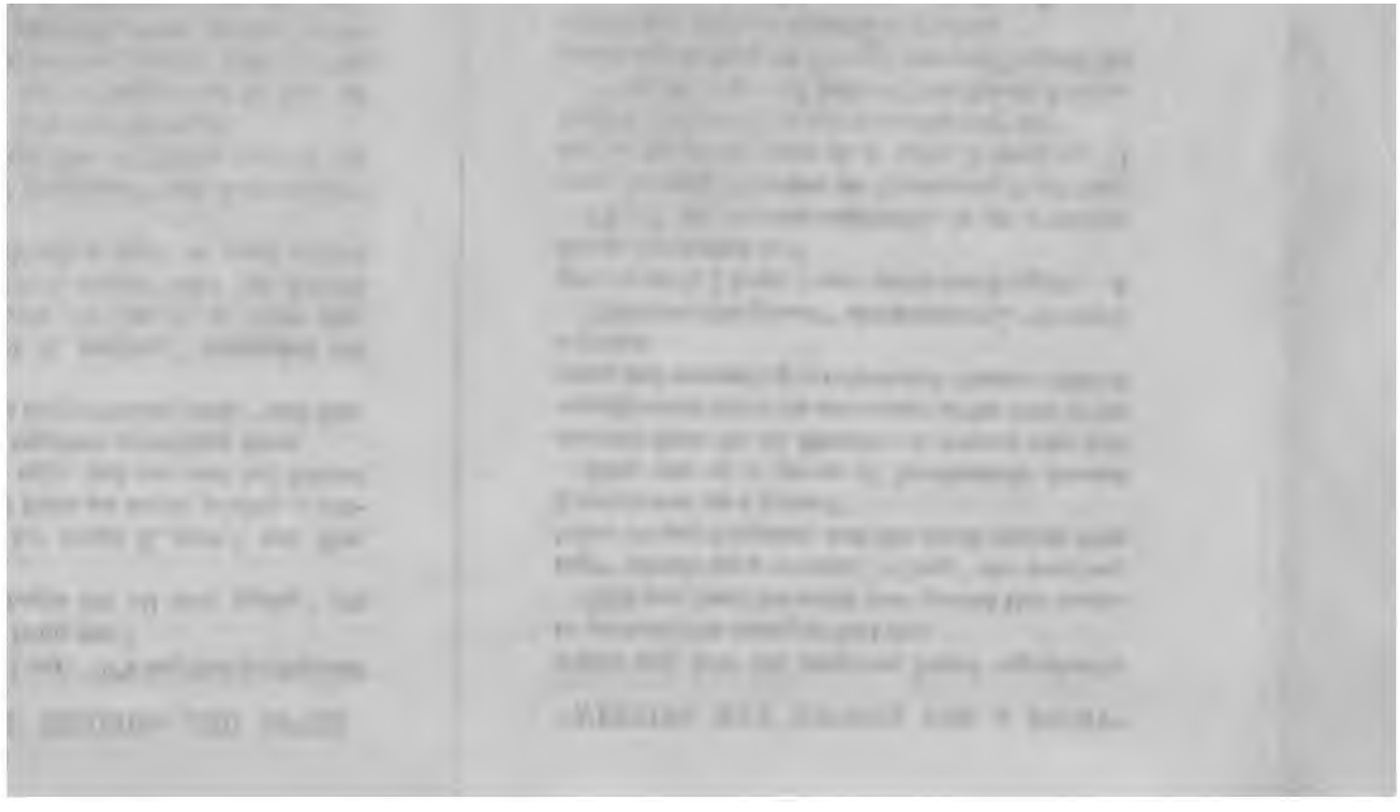
Here one of a group of handsomely dressed tourists from the St. Francis—a woman who had wearily sunk upon the pavement at the foot of the steps, and was eating crackers and cheese—uttered a groan.

"This horrible place!" she exclaimed, "if ever I get out of it, I hope I may never see it again. A house swallowed up!"

"Yes," the woman continued, in an awesome tone, heaping Olympus on Parnassus, "and they say *all the people were in it when it went in.* I believe they said you could see the roof yet."

"And the legs and arms of the frenzied occupants are sticking up through the roof," added the silent man, without a quiver of his face.

The young married woman rose from the steps as he spoke. She had been holding Jessica, asleep, in her arms, but she put the child down, and made her way through the crowd of refugees to the tall, silent man whose back was turned as he stood there looking out upon the flaming city. Her face was white, and as she touched the tall man's arm she trembled with emotions that ran over her as waves of wind run over a field. She had recognized a voice.



"Charlie."

And then he started and turned toward her, and in an instant his face changed.

"Charlie, I was to blame too! I can make things go better. O Charlie, let's begin again! I can't live without you!"

He couldn't speak, but he drew her to him, and she rested her tired head on his shoulder and sobbed aloud, regardless of those about her, and from that time on she walked no more alone, and there was no divorce registered in the court against his name and hers. Nobody had heeded except a gentle-faced old man who sat next to them.

"It's better to love than to hate," he said softly. "Mebbe God thinks we've gone the wrong way, an' He's a-teachin' us that we need erbout the same things—a leetle food and clothes and shelter, and a leetle love. It sorter makes us feel kinder ter one 'nother ter find we're so much erlike arter all. We kinder understan' one 'nother better. Most ov our quarrels is over leetle things that don't reelly matter. We'd better love, an' make excuses fer one 'nother."

Little Jessica, wakened out of her sleep, created a diversion here, for she fidgeted about until the vendor of horrors bade her sit still, and Pietro reinforced her command.

"You set still now," he said.

"I won't!" Jessica answered promptly. It was her invariable response to all adjuration.

"Something dreffful's goin' ter happen you if you don't behave!" Pietro threatened.

"It won't; it don't dare."

"Here, here!" said the stern-faced woman, "little girl, if you speak that way, God may punish you. He is angry when you are bad, and He may throw you into a place of torment."

"You lie!" said Jessica. "He won't frow me in no nassy place. He loves me."

Just then the Irishwoman's baby set up a piteous crying, and Jessica, who had received a hard-boiled egg from baby's mother, and had gnawed off the white part, now interrupted the yolk on its way to her hungry little mouth, and thrusting out a swift arm crammed the morsel into baby's mouth, where it instantly acted as a stopper of such perilous sort, that all the occupants of the steps were for some moments engaged in the difficult task of saving poor little Mr. Baby from death by choking.

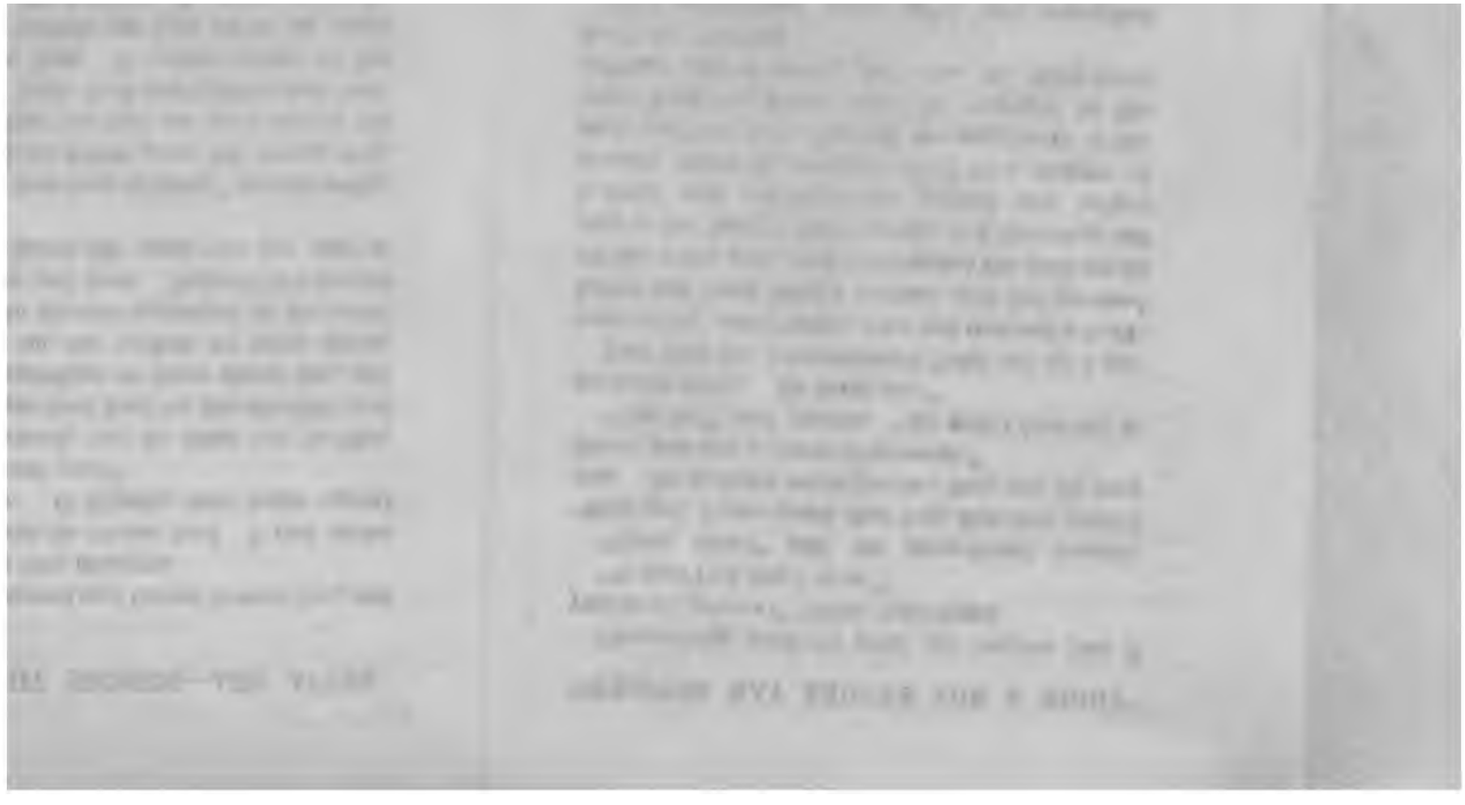
This excitement over, some one remarked drearily that the day had been one of horrors.

"We may expect horrors," said the stern-faced woman. "God has been watching this city, and He has stood its awful wickedness just as long as ever He can; now He's destroying it."

"Evidently, madame," the silent man remarked, "you enjoy the blessed privilege of being in the bosom of God's confidence."

The woman glared at him furiously.

"'Those eighteen upon whom the tower in Si-



loam fell, and slew them, think ye they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?' " began another woman, turning full upon her. "I tell you Nay, but except you repent, you shall likewise perish," she went on, altering the quotation slightly to suit the case in hand.

"Are you addressing your remarks to me, madame?" the stern one flashed out, but before the other could fit the quotation still more exactly to the sinner, a plain, kind-looking woman murmured softly:

" 'Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.' Perhaps this isn't a punishment; mebbe it's to show us our Heavenly Father more clear; mebbe it'll open our hearts to let Him in."

The flaxen-haired woman was sitting near the speaker, and within her heart she felt a stirring such as she had not known for years; a deep repulsion for that hardened life; a sorrow and yearning that kindled a hope of something better.

She leaned toward the kindly woman and whispered, in a voice choked with sobs:

"Is it ever too late to go to Him?"

"Never, deary; He's always calling us home."

"Oh, I want to go home!" said the woman, and she covered her face with her hands, and sobbed without restraint.

"San Francisco's done for!" exclaimed a man who stood down on the pavement.

"We'll build her up again," said another.

"Sure!" the first assented, as if that were a matter of course, "better than ever."

And all the while that strange procession had been moving steadily, wearily on, toward—no one knew where. Now and then somebody too worn out for another step sank on the street, off a little to one side perhaps, and slept right there, heedless of the passing throng, heedless of the raging fire—of everything but Nature's demand for rest.

On they went, this motley crowd; society girls, in light silks (the silks they had worn to the opera, the evening before) thrown hastily over their night robes; one of them was leading a pet bulldog by a piece of wire; others with several gowns, tumbled one over the other, in the wearer's desire to save her wardrobe, or in her forgetfulness that she already had anything on.

Animals were mixed up with human beings that night; canary birds enough to make vocal all California's forests; dogs, large and small, sharing what shelter and food the time afforded, even sharing their owner's last crust. One man had his cat in a pillow-slip which was gathered about her neck in a sort of Elizabethan ruff, her head sticking out at the top, and her wide, terrified eyes gazing at the strange scene. Baby carriages, cribs, couches, sewing machines, carpet sweepers —all were impressed as moving vans; perhaps the oddest vehicle of all was a ladder on roller skates, with the masculine head of the family bestriding

ivery park in ther city, an' shure it's a happy man Oi am!"

"An' what hev yez in ther wagon, Pat?" asked Mrs. O'Flarity, spying into the street.

"Shure it's all Oi could save from our home; it isn't much, but——"

"It's far bether than naythin," interrupted his spouse, cheerfully.

Together they set to work to empty the wagon and place its contents, while little Mike slept peacefully on the lawn; and in a merry space of time they had a rude shack patched together out of some timbers which Pat had saved from their ruined dwelling.

"Come in, now; come in, an' make yersilves welcome," called Mrs. O'Flarity to such of the occupants of the Van Ness doorsteps as had kept together. "Come, now, we'll breakfast in the twinkle of an eye. Faith, now, once I lived wid a leddy as was studyin' all ther while, an' I mind how she towld me ov a great poet thet said throuble was loike a frog that hed diamond earrings in his ears. Shure, we hevn't got no diamonds here, but we've got a loaf ov bread and two cans ov corn beef, an' thet's a dale betther; isn't it now, Pat, me beauty?"

Pat assented, and so did the rest, who were standing around regarding the new building with more astonishment and admiration than was ever lavished on the Fairmount Hotel.

"Come, now, Pat—come to breakfast all of yez,"

called Mrs. O'Flarity, and Pat answered the call heartily, having just put the finishing touches to a coal-sketched motto over the door—"God bliss our home."

"There were two little childer here awhile ago," said Mrs. O'Flarity, remembering Pietro and Jessica, just as she was about to seat herself at her board; "mind ther baby, Pat, and serve the company, whilst I look thim up."

"I've been looking for them," said the young married lady, coming up the walk, "but I can't find them. I'm afraid they've gone off; they must have slipped away in the excitement. I'm so sorry."

"Shure now, Oi'm sorry too. The little dears'll be wanthing some breakfast; wun of thim was fightin hungry as it waz."

They were indeed hungry, these little children, but child fashion had run away from their best good. It was Jess again; she was the restless one; Pietro and Nero would have stayed, but for her wanting to see and follow after something or other. Once off, nobody knew the way back and so they kept moving. Covering the ground, after the aimless, wonderful manner of children, they reached the Mechanics' Pavilion, and found the street in front of it filled with all manner of vehicles and men rushing out of the big building, carrying limp, helpless figures in their arms. To Pietro and Jessica the scene was bewildering, for they did not know that a west wind had carried the

dogs, and as he looked toward them his face changed, and he uttered an exclamation of horror, and raised his gun quickly.

Nero was quarrelling with two other dogs over some object they were dragging from a near-by ruin.

"Get out of the way," the soldier exclaimed to Jessica, "I'm going to shoot the brutes."

But Jessica flung herself upon Nero. She understood the word shoot full well, and knew what guns were for.

"You wicked, bad, red idi't!" she screamed, "don't you hurt my doggie!"

He dropped his gun, and kicking away the dogs, whose savage hunger had turned them into ghouls, took Pietro up into his arms, and followed by Jessica and Nero started off for the nearest military station.

"Ask the Colonel to send for an ambulance," he said. "I have a sick child here who must go to the Hospital, and his little sister will have to go with him, there's no other place for her."

"And Nero," Jessica added firmly; and Nero went, for when the ambulance arrived he pleaded so hard, in his dumb way, and Jessica stormed and cried so hard, that no one had heart to say him nay.

"Poor little things!" said a nurse who met them at the door of the Hospital.

She was flaxen-haired, and Jessica remembered having seen her somewhere before. A

volunteer nurse she was, who had come in the day before, and offered her services, which were gladly accepted, the Hospital being crowded, and the work too heavy for the usual staff.

"What's that dog doing here? He can't come in," said the head nurse.

Then Jessica began to cry, not wilfully, as of old, but in a piteous, helpless sort of way that touched the hearts of all who heard.

"Let him stay in the yard," the soldier suggested. "He seems to be all these children have left."

So Nero was tolerated, and took up his watch at the door which had closed on his little charges. Nor would he leave his post for food or drink, but happily some kind soul, spurred by Jessica's parting admonition, brought both of these to him.

It did not take the flaxen-haired nurse long to put poor little Pietro into a hot bath, and from out of that into a soft, white bed; but it was a task of bigger proportions to restore Jessica's face to its pristine color, and to put to flight the tangles that had taken possession of her yellow hair. New work all this for the new nurse, and possibly she had no right to spend so much time on these two children, but there was a growing hunger in her heart that fed with eager greed upon this care of the tiny tramps.

A day or two of rest and food restored Pietro. He was now able to be up, and to tell how his father had left them in the Plaza.

"Mamma is gone away to heaven for a little while; then she's coming back again," Jessica said.

She had gotten this idea firmly in mind somehow; she could not have explained, but she had told this before, and every time she spoke of it Pietro cried bitterly.

"It's barely possible their father's here among the patients," said the head nurse when the matter was brought to her; "at all events it'll do no harm to take them through the Hospital and let them look."

"Wouldn't it be a good idea to let the dog go too?" suggested the flaxen-haired nurse. "He seems so intelligent; he might help find his master."

"Yes, take him too," the head nurse assented. "Poor little tots," she added, a tender look lighting her kind face. "I hope they'll find their father, or somebody who belongs to them."

And then she went quickly about her varied tasks, while the children's nurse took them to call Nero in and make the tour of the big Hospital.

"We'll go into all the men's wards first," she said, and so they did, but there was no one of their kith or kin to recognize them; no neighbor or acquaintance even.

"There may be some one who knows you in the women's wards; don't cry, little dears," urged the nurse, for Pietro was in tears again, and even Jessica's brave, blue eyes were brimming.

"'This is my papa,' she said."—P. 53.

"BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING"

They turned to go down a broad stairway, but Nero refused to follow. He had been exploring on his own account, and was standing now at a door near by, whining to get in.

"There's no one there but a few old men who are just about gone; they wouldn't know anything," said a nurse who was passing that way.

"Come, Nero; come," called the flaxen-haired nurse, and Jessica added her imperious little voice to the nurse's.

But Nero paid no heed; he still stood there, whining, scratching, and listening by turns.

Jessica ran back to cuff him, just as the nurse within, hearing the noise, opened the door to enquire what it all meant.

Before she could prevent him, the dog ran in, closely followed by Jessica, and then, with a hasty word of explanation, by the flaxen-haired woman and Pietro.

From one cot to another the dog ran, sniffing and whining, unheeded by the old men whose life circuit was all but complete. Suddenly he paused beside a bed that stood near a window, and began eagerly to lick the face of the unconscious occupant—a young man. Jessica paused too and a deep, controlled emotion, strange in a child, dawned upon her face. Laying a firm little hand on the coverlid, she turned to the flaxen-haired nurse, who was closely following her:

"This is my papa," she said.

And then the flaxen-haired woman burst into tears, and knelt by the bed, murmuring:

"John! O John, forgive me!"

A look of consciousness dawned on the face of the sick man. Slowly, with a strength born of excitement, he raised upon his elbow and looked at his children, while the flaxen-haired woman shrank back.

He was not a demonstrative man; he spoke no word, but his trembling hand went out and rested on Jessica's sturdy head.

"He'll live now," said his nurse, smiling and crying both; "he's wounded, but that don't amount to much; he's just been sinking from day to day—dying of a broken heart."

The flaxen-haired woman bent over him, and whispered, between her sobs:

"John, for the dear Lord's sake, forgive me. O God, I'm so sorry! I want to do better. Take me back, John! It's Meggie."

And John heard, but through his wakened brain there flashed a wave of resentment. He thought of his dearly loved mother, dead these three years now—dead of a broken heart. But soon he thought of his father, bowed with grief and shame, living on in the little house far East, keeping the door open by night and day, for five years, waiting for Meggie to come home; and then in an instant his mind, long clouded by the nursing of an injury, cleared, and opened to a better knowledge of God. If the earthly father could love

so faithfully and could forgive, would not the Heavenly Father——

"Meggie, girl," he murmured, taking her hand in his, "forgive the wrong I done *you*; we'll both begin again."

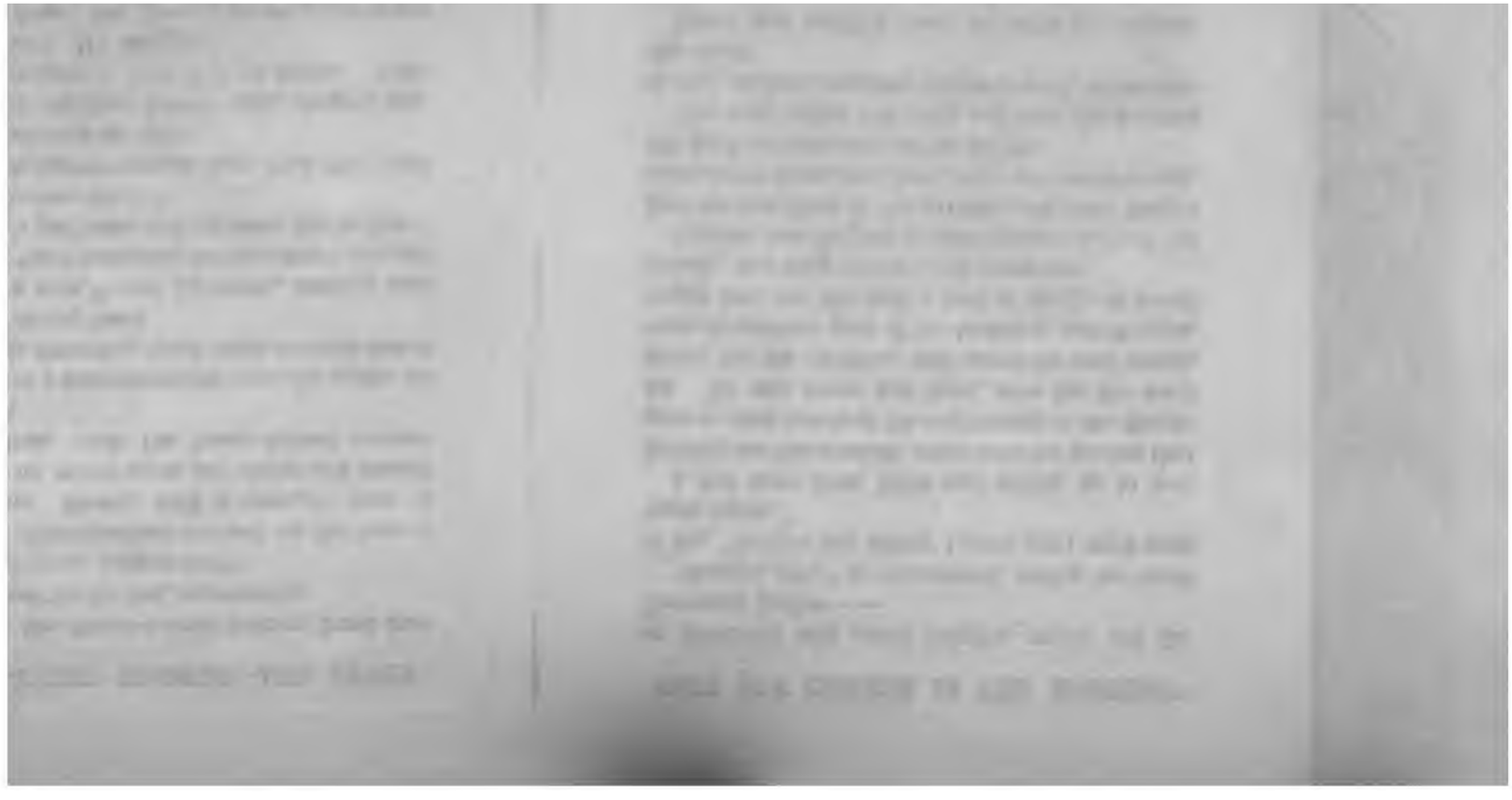
A few days later John was sitting up in bed, looking out the window, down into the garden that gave a vivid touch of life and beauty to the Hospital. He was alone just then, save for the ward nurse, for his children, well cared-for and happy, were in another part of the building, and Meggie, happy too, her life now a sort of jangle of sweet chords, was busy at her work elsewhere.

A nurse was helping a convalescent patient out into the sunshine of the garden, and John looked down upon them, and then, without a word or cry, fell back unconscious on his pillow.

The ward nurse had seen, and now she hurried to him, and as she came, glanced hastily down into the court.

There was nothing there to make one swoon, she thought—just a few invalids, among them a slender pretty Spanish woman. But when John came too, a few broken words from him told the story, and they sent for Rosina.

And while he lay there awaiting her coming, his heart throbbing music, as in the old days when he heard her footstep, he looked out, far out from the window over the fallen city—acre after acre of desolation; smoking ruins, heap upon heap; gaunt, jagged columns, one, or two, or three to-



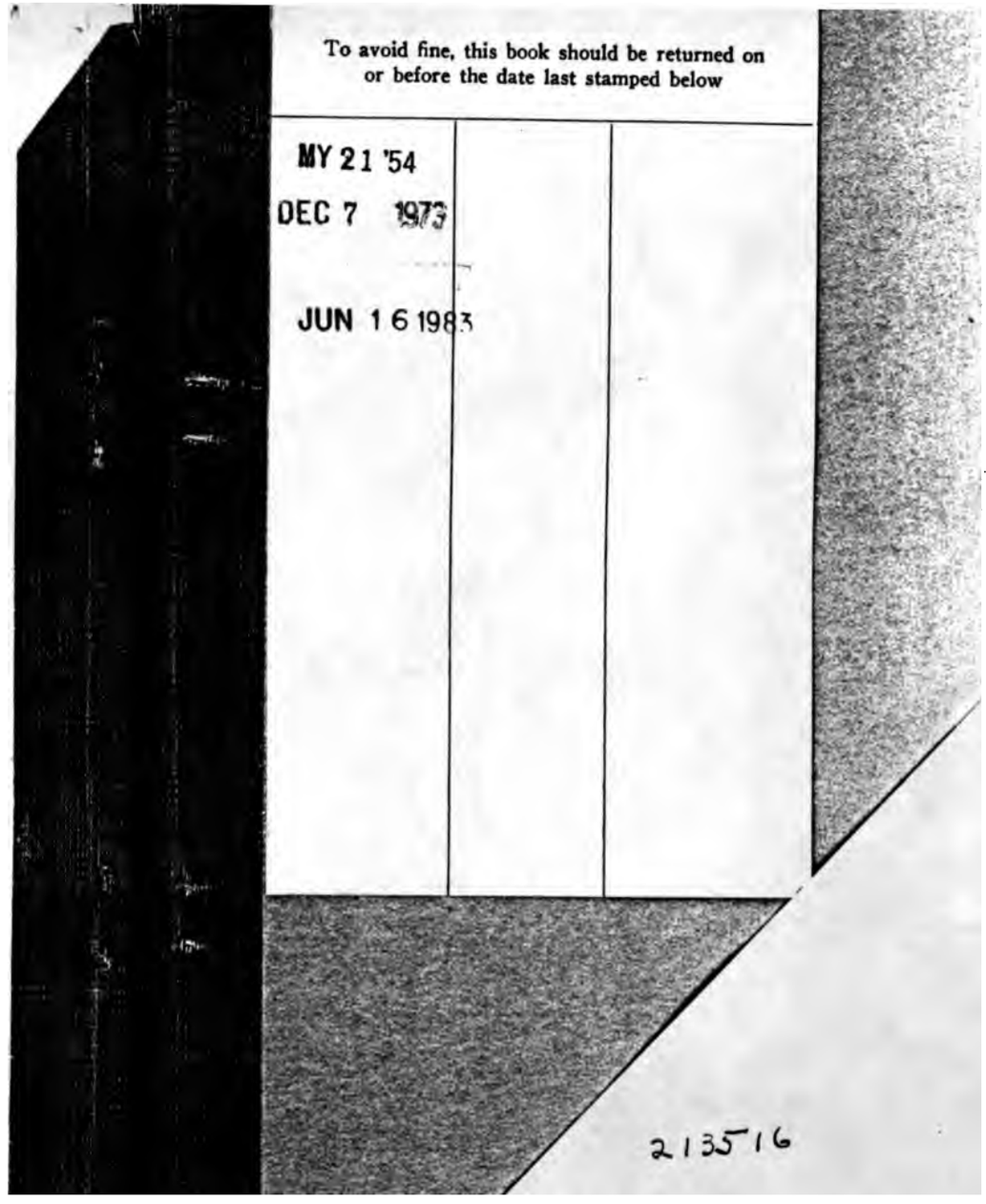
gether, pointing heavenward, and telling the piteous story of their ruin; blackened, tottering walls, one or more, all that remained of proud, substantial buildings—a sight to break one's heart if one saw that, and that alone.

But John saw more, for, thank God! there is besides the eye of flesh, so limited in its vision, the eye of faith and hope, and with this John saw a new and better city; with this he saw a reunited family, another little home, lighted as the old home had been by a love that no calamity could overwhelm—a love victorious, eternal.

Ending happily? And why not, pray? since misery is discord, and happiness is harmony, and harmony the very core of righteousness.

Jess was the only one not quite at peace. Nero's manners disturbed her.

"He hasn't shaked his tail the same," she said, "not once the same since that nassy ertquate."


To avoid fine, this book should be returned on or before the date last stamped below

MY 21 '54

DEC 7 1973

JUN 16 1983

213516